

In the 90 years since Father Sharp presided over the first Mass at St. Symphorosa, succeeding generations have come to worship at this parish. The church, located at 6135 South Austin, has arduously carried out its mission in faith and in service to its community. All worshippers at the parish have come together and worked towards the fulfillment of their faith and the betterment of their community.

The hard work that the parish undertakes has not gone unnoticed by the local community. St. Symphorosa runs a special ministry for children and young adults with developmental disabilities, hosts local Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops and operates a chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society to give back to those in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing St. Symphorosa Parish and congratulate them as they celebrate their 90th anniversary. May St. Symphorosa continue their great work in the community, while inspiring others through their mission and faith.

REMEMBERING FANNIE LOU HAMER, COURAGEOUS AND TIRELESS FIGHTER FOR VOTING RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WHO SPOKE TRUTH TO POWER AND TOUCHED THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 6, 2017*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Congressional Black Caucus and a Co-Chair of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, I rise in remembrance of Fannie Lou Hamer, a leading heroine of the Civil Rights Movement, a fearless fighter for voting rights and social justice who spoke truth to power and touched conscience of the nation.

On this day, exactly 100 years ago, October 6, 1917, Fannie Lou Hamer was born in Montgomery County, Mississippi to Lou Ella and James Lee Townsend, the youngest of twenty children.

Although she managed to complete several years of school, by adolescence Fannie Lou Hamer was picking hundreds of pounds of cotton a day.

She would later meet and marry Perry Hamer, known as Pap, and work alongside him as sharecroppers at W.D. Marlow's plantation near Ruleville, in Sunflower County, Mississippi.

From these humble beginnings Fannie Lou Hamer would go on to become one of the iconic figures of the Civil Rights Movement that succeeded in bringing down the Jericho walls of de jure segregation and winning passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the greatest victory for civil rights and human dignity since the Emancipation Proclamation.

Mr. Speaker, one of our proudest boasts as Americans is that "one person can make a difference."

The life of Fannie Lou Hamer demonstrates that this is not an idle boast but a simple truth.

Fannie Lou Hamer dedicated her life to the fight for civil rights, working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization that engaged in acts of civil disobedience to fight racial segregation and injustice in the South.

During the 1950s, when Fannie Lou Hamer was in her 30's, she attended several annual conferences of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL), a civil rights and self-help organization that ignited her passion for activism.

In 1962 Fannie Lou Hamer took up the call to try and register to vote in Mississippi, a state whose constitution and laws erected barriers such as poll taxes and literacy tests to disenfranchise African Americans.

It was on the bus trip to Indianola, Mississippi to register to vote that, in what would become her signature trait as an activist, she began singing African American spirituals such as "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and "This Little Light of Mine."

Singing spirituals reflected her firm belief that the struggle for civil rights was a righteous cause and toiling in this vineyard was the Christian thing to do.

Fannie Lou Hamer's courage and leadership in Indianola came to the attention of SNCC organizer Bob Moses who recruited her to travel around the South doing organizing work for the organization.

Being an African American activist was at that time in that place was dangerous, but that did not deter the fierce Fannie Lou Hamer:

I guess if I'd had any sense, I'd have been a little scared—but what was the point of being scared? The only thing they could do was kill me, and it kinda seemed like they'd been trying to do that a little bit at a time since I could remember.

During one of Fannie Lou Hamer's trips she and other civil rights activists were arrested and badly beaten on the orders of police officers.

After recovering from the assault she returned to activism and the task of organizing voter registration drives:

Sometimes it seem like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I'm not backing off.

In 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer helped organize "Freedom Summer," during which she was known by other activists as a motherly figure who strongly believed that the civil rights struggle should be broad-based and multi-racial.

Later that year, Fannie Lou Hamer helped to found and served as Vice-Chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MDFP), which challenged the seating of the all-white and anti-civil rights Mississippi delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In Atlantic City, Fannie Lou Hamer addressed the Democratic National Convention's Credentials Committee, where she passionately recounted the problems she had encountered in voter registration, including the vicious beatings she received in jail:

All of this is on account we want to register to become first-class citizens, and if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings—in America?

Fannie Lou Hamer's raw, authentic, and powerful testimony was so compelling that President Lyndon Johnson hastily called a

White House press conference to divert media attention, which succeeded temporarily until the broadcast networks replayed her speech, unedited and uninterrupted, on the evening news.

Responding to Fannie Lou Hamer's speech, viewers flooded the Democratic National Credentials Committee with thousands of calls and letters demanding the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates.

Although the MDP's delegates were not seated, as a compromise the Democratic Party changed its bylaws to require equality of representation of state delegations to the national convention, which led in turn to the selection of Fannie Lou Hamer as a delegate to the 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida.

Fannie Lou Hamer died on March 14, 1977 in Mound Bayou, Mississippi at the age of 59, due to her poor health, a combination of a lifetime in poverty, her 1963 beating, and a 1976 cancer diagnosis.

Mr. Speaker, Fannie Lou Hamer was always about paying it forward:

Never to forget where we came from and always praise the bridges that carried us over.

As the third African American woman elected to Congress from the State of Texas, the second to serve on the House Committee on the Judiciary, and the first to become the Ranking Democratic Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, I am ever mindful and grateful of the sacrifices made by giants like Fannie Lou Hamer so that persons like me have the opportunity to serve and contribute to the greatness of our country.

I ask the House to observe a moment of silence in memory of Fannie Lou Hamer on the 100th anniversary of her birth.

Happy birthday Fannie Lou, you made a difference; you made America better.

HONORING DARLENE TOOLEY ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 6, 2017*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Darlene Tooley, as she retires from Northern Circle Indian Housing Authority (NCIHA) after 39 years of exemplary service.

NCIHA was formed in 1978, with Ms. Tooley as its founding Executive Director, to provide affordable housing to native families in Northern California. Under her leadership, the organization has worked with member tribes to acquire and place into trust over 1,000 acres of land, created 371 affordable homes, and replaced over 30 dilapidated homes in native communities. Ms. Tooley also created First Time Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance and Tenant Based Rental Assistance programs, which have helped numerous individuals secure housing.

The breadth of Ms. Tooley's civic contributions include her service as a founding member of Indian Dispute Resolution Services, treasurer of the Nevada/California Indian Housing Association, and member of the board of directors of the Southwest Indian